

Abstract 527

TITLE: User Preference of Spermicide/Microbicide Forms

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OBJECTIVE: The purpose of this analysis was to evaluate user preferences of spermicide/microbicide products among women at high risk of sexually transmitted diseases (STD) who had participated in a prospective study of barrier contraception for STD prevention.

METHODS: Women who had participated in a study of spermicide and condom efficacy were recalled for one follow-up interview to assess attitudes toward chemical barriers, experience with the products distributed in the study, and preferences. Contingency table analysis techniques and multinomial regression were used to evaluate product preference and to compare groups of women who preferred different products.

RESULTS: Of the 1,122 women who participated in the prospective study, 155 returned for the interview. The group was mainly African American (95%); single (72%), with an average age of 25. Most had an education level less than or equal to 12 years (72%); the average per month per capita income was \$200; average age at first intercourse was 16; the average lifetime sexual partners was 6; 28% had more than one sexual partner in the past month; 72% had a previous STD; 77% had been pregnant; 68% had at least one child; and the average age at first pregnancy was 17. Demographic characteristics, sexual history and barrier use patterns did not differ between prospective study participants who returned for the interview and those who did not. Among the 155 participants, 51 (33%) ranked film as their first choice, followed by jelly (33, 21%), suppository (29, 19%), and foam (23, 15%). Among women who used 3-4 products, the preference hierarchy was film>suppositories>jelly>foam. Women who preferred jelly were similar to women who preferred foam with respect to sociodemographic (age, education, income, marital status), sexual history (number of lifetime partners, age at first intercourse) reproductive history (age at first pregnancy, parity) and STD history. Compared to the previous two groups, women who preferred the film were older and less educated, while women who preferred suppositories were younger, less educated and had fewer partners. Age, education and number of partners were all significant predictors of preference heterogeneity in a multinomial regression model.

CONCLUSION: Of women who have used spermicide products, film is the most preferred method overall, with jelly and suppositories chosen next, and foam the least preferred method. Solid products may be easier to use and are preferred by women at low educational levels.

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